1:Indiana U. S-4, 5(1954-5)1955 RG4 Estonia RG4

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Estonia is a country of polyglots. A great percentage of people speak three local languages and the educated class usually speaks more. Estonian, German and Russian are the major languages spoken in Estonia. According to the census of 1934 Estonian was spoken as the native tongue by 88.2 per cent of the inhabitants of Estonia. At the same time Russian was the native language of 8.2 per cent of the inhabitants --Russians living in the southeastern part of Setumaa and on the banks of the Narva River. Two towns, Petseri and Narva, had also a considerable number of Russians. German is spoken as the native tongue by 1.5 per cent of the population of Estonia--by the Baltic Germans,

162 85 per cent of whom left Estonia in the fall of
• 191 1939 and settled in Germany.

191 Since German has always been taught in Es-
871 tonian schools it is undoubtedly the best known foreign language in this country. This situation has probably not been too much changed even now, after ten years of Soviet occupation. To-
[77] gether with knowledge of the language, German cultural influence has also been incomparably greater than Russian influence. During the independence of Estonia, Russian was not taught in Estonian schools except in the commercial schools and a few others, so that the generation which grew up during this period does not speak Russian. When the Soviet occupation began Russian was required in every type of school. By this time the younger generation certainly has mastered Russian as well as their

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191 predecessors did under Czarist rule.
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The middle-aged generation which received a secondary education during independence times has some knowledge of English, which was then taught as the first or second foreign language in the majority of the schools. According to reports from occupied Estonia, the Russians have completely dropped English from the school curriculum and accordingly the younger generation knows only Russian and German.

In fourth place would be a knowledge of the French language. This language was taught in a few schools during the independence period and was taught slightly more during the czarist regime. There are few people who read French and still fewer who can speak it.

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197 A condsiderable number of younger people would also understand Finnish. Besides the fact

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that their languages are closely related, the Estonians and Finns have maintained for almost a century an interest in each other and a warm cultural intercourse. This started during the National Awakening[1] and grew into an enthusiastic movement during the independence period. Various student and professional organizations, for example, had yearly joint conferences with corresponding Finnish organizations.

101 The name Estonian (eesti keel) has come fairly recently into use. Formerly the Estonians called their language maa keel 'country language' and the people who spoke this language maa rahvas 'country people.' The terms Eesti and eesti keel came into use around the middle of the nineteenth century. These words are explained as originating from Tacitus's Germanis XLV in which Aestii, Aestiorum gentes are mentioned

[1] [SEE cat. 116, -99- pp 26-33 - Analyst]

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191 177 Knowledge of foreign languages. Almost all of the Vepsians know Russian. Turunen states (p. 156) that, "The Vepsians have bilingualism in their blood." Russian tends to penetrate even into their everyday life, for the Vepsians sing Russian folk songs, the so-called chastushka, and tell their tales both in Vepsian and Russian. However, the knowledge of Russian is, among the older people, sometimes not very thorough. This appears for instance in loan-translations, some of which bear witness to the confusion of Russian words which are close in sound, such as Vepsian seista 'to stand, to cost' (from Russian stojat' 'to stand', and stoit' 'to cost'); and Vepsian veda- 'to convey, to weigh' (from Russian vezti ' to convey', and vesit' 'to weigh'). The younger generation, however, knows Russian well.

197 Vepsians are linguistically most closely related to the Karelians whose language they can learn to understand completely within a few days. The knowledge of Karelian is more widespread among the North Vepsians who live in the neighborhood of the Karelians and have frequent contact with them.

The Vepsian language and its dialects. Although Vepsian is close to Karelian and Finnish,

177 by the aggressive policy of denationalization of the Livonians by the Latvian church and schools. Church services have always been held in Latvian, even though the congregation in [191] former times did not understand it. In the schools the Latvian teachers punished the speakers of Livonian by beating them and sending them to stand in the corner. Livonian was [166] laughed at and called the "horse language." An especially strong blow was dealt to Livonianism during the first World War when all the Livonians had to leave their homes and spend several years among the Latvians or the Russians. When after the war they returned to their homes, the younger generation hardly knew any Livonian at all. Loorits, who visited these people in 1920, gives the following description: "Livonian is known in all villages, but it is a half-dead language which is usually not spoken. There are still families who speak Livonian, but even more numerous are those where the children do not know any Livonian at all." (Liivi rahva olevik, p. 76.)

After the war, the academic circles of free Estonia and Finland tried to assist in the preservation of the small Livonian ethnic group, but the Latvians, on the other hand, did everything possible to accelerate their assimi- 177 lation. The Livonians' dream of having their 668 own county was, after great efforts made by the Livonians, finally granted by one Latvian government but refused by the next one. Lead-

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•191 The Livonians know, besides their native tongue, Latvian, which enjoys the privilage of the literary language and is in many families used also as the everyday spoken language. Among the older generation the knowledge of Estonian is also very widespread, due to the close association between the Livonians and the Estonians of Saaremaa. Only a few know Russian.

197 The Livonian language is closely related to Estonian, especially to South Estonian. It is divided into two dialects: West and East Livonian. West Livonian comprises the Piza and Luuzh villages, and East Livonian the villages beginning from Uushkila eastward. The language of Iira village constitutes an intermediate dialect. The differences between West and East Livonian are rather insignificant, as one can expect in such a small area. The main phonetic distinction is the preservation of the ę̄ vowel (back e, which occurs also in Estonian and Votic) in the eastern dialects, while in the West it has developed to ü and further to i; for instance: East Livonian vę̄za 'sprout, shoot,' vę̄ę̄rə̂Z 'strange,' West Livonian vüza, vüürə̂Z. There is a difference also in the development of the long a: its preservation in West and change almost to an

4: Indiana U. S-4, 5 1955 RG4 Estonia RG4
Livonians

533 line songs, or dainas, and the later romances,
177 or zinges) have come to the Livonians by way
•[191] of literature. Several songs are sung by the Livonians in two languages--Livonian and Latvian. Some of the Livonian songs have been borrowed from the Estonians in Saaremaa, and a very few from the Germans.

533 The most vital among the Livonian folk songs sung in the native language are the children's songs. The more Latvian gained ground as the language of public life and the more Livonian was confined to home use, the more have the former Livonian songs passed over into the children's repertoire.

The women, who have stuck closer to home and had less contact with the outside world, have had less opportunity to learn Latvian, and, as a result, are the last and only bearers of the folk song tradition. But a few decades ago even the women began to sing to their children the Latvian songs and to teach them Latvian, so as to prepare them for their future life.

177 The Livonians still sing their old songs
533 on Easter morning. On other occasions, however, the songs are sung mainly in Latvian. This holds true especially of the wedding songs for which Latvian singers have been brought from the inland area. This was occurring even some time ago when the majority of the wedding guests did not even understand much Latvian. Many love songs also are sung in Latvian.